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HANOI PLEDGE ON THAI INSURGENCY

ANNCR:

VIETNAM HAS FORMALLY PROMISED THE BANGKOK GOVERNMENT THAT IT WILL NOT GIVE AID TO COMMUNIST INSURGENTS IN THAILAND....AS WE HEAR IN THIS BACKGROUND REPORT BY VOA'S JOSEPH SULLIVAN.

VOICE:

THE VIETNAMESE PLEDGE TO DENY AID TO THAI INSURGENTS WAS GIVEN IN A JOINT COMMUNIQUE ENDING A FIVE-DAY VISIT TO THAILAND BY VIETNAMESE PREMIER PHAM VAN DONG. THE COMMUNIQUE STRESSES THE DETERMINATION OF THE TWO COUNTRIES NOT TO CARRY OUT SUBVERSION -- DIRECT OR INDIRECT -- AGAINST EACH OTHER. EACH COUNTRY, IT SAYS, HAS A RIGHT TO DEVELOP ITS OWN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEM WITHOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE.

COMMUNIST INFILTRATION AND SUBVERSION IN THAILAND WAS BROUGHT INTO THE OPEN IN 1965 WITH ARMED INSURGENT ATTACKS ON THAI SECURITY FORCES AND ASSASSINATIONS OF VILLAGE LEADERS IN NORTHEAST THAILAND, WHERE MANY VIETNAMESE LIVE. THE THAI GOVERNMENT RESPONDED WITH AN ACCELERATED PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. AND, BY 1968 THE GOVERNMENT'S COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFORTS SEEMED TO HAVE STALEMATED THE INSURGENTS, AT LEAST IN THE NORTHEAST. BUT SINCE THEN, INCIDENTS OF COMMUNIST TERRORISM AND SABOTAGE HAVE GRADUALLY INCREASED. THE THAI GOVERNMENT ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE ABOUT SEVEN THOUSAND ARMED INSURGENTS NATIONWIDE, THOUGH OTHER ESTIMATES PLACE THEIR STRENGTH AT SEVERAL THOUSAND HIGHER.

PHAM VAN DONG TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE IN BANGKOK THAT HE WANTED TO MAKE CLEAR THAT VIETNAM WOULD NOT SUPPORT ANY COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS IN THAILAND. VIETNAM, HE ADDED, WOULD DO NOTHING TO DAMAGE THAILAND'S INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY. THERE SEEMS TO

BE LITTLE QUESTION THAT THE VIETNAMESE PLEDGE IS INTENDED TO REASSURE NOT ONLY THAILAND BUT ALSO THE NON-COMMUNIST NATIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WHERE HANOI IS SEEKING SUPPORT.

CHINA, WHICH, LIKE VIETNAM, HAS LONG SUPPORTED INSURGENT MOVEMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, HAS NEVER GIVEN A CLEAR-CUT PUBLIC PLEDGE DISAVOWING MATERIAL AID TO INSURGENTS. PEKING'S APPROACH IS TO IMPROVE GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION BUT ALSO TO CONTINUE SUPPORT FOR COMMUNIST PARTIES AND INSURGENTS ON AT LEAST A LIMITED BASIS.

THE PHAM VAN DONG VISIT HAS BEEN HAILED BY THE THAIS AS OPENING A "NEW ERA" IN THAI-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS, AND THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS IN HANOI HAS CALLED IT A "TURNING POINT." PHAM VAN DONG IS EXPECTED TO MAKE SIMILAR VISITS EARLY NEXT MONTH TO THE PHILIPPINES, INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA -- THREE MEMBER STATES OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS. OBSERVERS SEE THE RECENT DETERIORATION IN VIETNAM'S RELATIONS WITH CHINA AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR BEHIND HANOI'S CURRENT EFFORTS TO WIN NEW FRIENDS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

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